



Helping Hands

JSC's on-site blood drive reaches for increased participation

By Dan Mangieri

The gift of life is a term that at least one JSC employee knows very well, since the blood given by her fellow employees did indeed save her life.

Heidi Glaisyer, of the Engineering Directorate recently needed a kidney transplant because she is suffering from End Stage Renal Disease, or kidney failure.

During the transplant, she bled severely and required several units of blood. Thanks to co-workers, she was able to have designated blood available. Unfortunately the kidney transplant failed and she is awaiting another. In the meantime, the complications of the illness cause her to be extremely anemic and her body has slowed dramatically in producing red blood cells. She still requires units of blood monthly.

"My friends here at JSC have always seen that blood is put in my name when I let them know I need it," Glaisyer said. "I feel lucky to have help from my friends—their simple 30 minute contribution literally has saved my life."

Knowing that blood was available for her use gives Glaisyer a sense of peace about her illness, she said, and JSC employees now have the opportunity to give to other fellow workers.

Just last week another JSC employee, Dave Saucier of the Space Station Program Office, was hospitalized with Lymphoma—cancer of the lymph nodes. As a result, he was in critical need of blood. JSC employees responded generously last Friday and Monday when St. Luke's brought the donor coach out for a special two-day platelet and plasma drive to acquire replacement units for Saucier.

Platelets are cells in the blood and plasma is the liquid portion of the blood. In order to give Saucier these critical components, employees donated two and a half hours of

their time to give platelets and about 40 minutes to an hour for plasma. Normal blood donations take 30 minutes.

The JSC on-site Blood Drive program will be kicking into high gear Thursday with increased efforts to reach out to those employees who have not participated in past blood drives. Those wishing to donate blood

blood assurance coverage for all JSC personnel and their immediate families. The coverage includes all fees associated with blood products for blood transfused in any Houston area hospital. An immediate family is considered the spouse of an employee, any dependent children and the parents of the employee and spouse. An employee

donor. If donors have any questions about how a medical condition may affect their ability to give blood they should call St. Luke's Blood Donor Center at 791-4483.

The simple process is started by taking a blood sample with a single prick to a finger. Afterwards, one pint of blood is drawn. Many employees do not realize that center policy allows employees to use up to four hours, if needed, to give blood at the on-site blood drive. Much less time is usually necessary. The actual collection of blood usually takes seven to 10 minutes, with the whole process taking approximately 30 minutes. The blood undergoes several tests, including the tests for hepatitis and HIV. If there are reactive test results, donors are notified by mail. All results are kept confidential. Donors are encouraged to eat a low-fat meal before and drink lots of fluids after giving blood. Usually there are no negative reactions to giving blood, but trained personnel are available in case a donor becomes light-headed. It is recommended that donors curtail heavy exercise for a period of 24 hours after donating.

For more information about the process, call Marty Demaret at x36007 or Dan Mangieri at x33003. □



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—Heidi Glaisyer
Engineering Directorate

can visit the Teague Auditorium anytime between 7:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m., including lunch time. Employees are encouraged to "bring a buddy" to the event if possible.

In addition to the regular benefits related to giving blood JSC's partner for sponsoring blood drives, St. Luke's Episcopal Hospital, will provide free T-shirts for all those who donate blood at the upcoming drive. Other changes to the program, like moving the drive's location from the Gilruth to the Teague Auditorium, will make it convenient and accessible to more employees despite busy schedules and routines.

The benefits of being a Blood Donor—besides the good feeling of knowing that you are helping others in need—are many. Under the agreement with St. Luke's, NASA and NASA contractors, the hospital provides

who is a single parent receives coverage for all tax dependent children and the employee's parents. Single employees who are unmarried and without children receive coverage for themselves, their parents and any tax-dependent siblings of their parents.

As an additional benefit to donors, approximately three to four weeks after each donation, St. Luke's will send them a card with information about their blood group and type, and cholesterol level.

What is involved in donating blood? Donors can give blood every eight weeks. Plasma can be donated up to twice a week and platelets twice a month. In some cases a donor may be deferred if, for example, their blood is low in iron or they've been on certain medications. However, taking blood pressure medicine will not disqualify a

JSC's Blood Donor Drive

7:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.

Thursday

Teague Auditorium

Bring a buddy



Above: From left, Assistant Director Brian Duffy receives a blood donor T-shirt from blood recipient Heidi Glaisyer and one of JSC's most frequent blood donor, Dave DeAtkine of the Customer and Flight Integration Office presents a T-shirt to JSC Deputy Director Jim Wetherbee. The T-shirt will be given to all donors during next week's blood drive. Those wishing to donate blood can visit the Teague Auditorium anytime between 7:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Thursday. Left: Safety Reliability and Quality Assurance Director Charlie Harlan relaxes after giving blood. Right: Former JSC employee Ray Hischke helps a St. Luke's nurse prepare to give blood.